

1 July 2002

The Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations & Education
Legislation Committee
Suite S1.61, parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

**AICD submission to the Australian Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee on Workplace Relations Amendment (Paid Maternity Leave) Bill 2002**

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on the Workplace Relations Amendment (Paid Maternity Leave) Bill 2002. Unfortunately due to resource and time constraints the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) will not be able to provide a detailed submission on this very important issue.

However, as you may be aware, delegates at the AICD's May 2002 Conference on the Gold Coast were asked their views on this issue. The results of the relevant section of the survey are attached. We would stress that the survey results do not represent AICD policy on this matter.

One sub-issue which is of obvious concern to the AICD, given its large percentage of directors representing small and medium enterprises, is the affordability of paid maternity leave for small business. This sub-issue is particularly relevant to the proposals for employer contributions through top up and additional payments or periods of leave. Any policy developments in the area of paid maternity leave must be careful not to set up a situation that encourages any segment of the economy to break the law by discriminating against those of child bearing age. This is critically important for the small business section of the economy given its huge number and employment capacity.

Whilst the AICD has at this stage only been able to give the above very brief response on this issue we do encourage a full and informed debate on this crucial issue. Please continue to keep the AICD informed of the progress of this matter as part of your ongoing consultation process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this matter should you need to do so.

Yours faithfully

Rob Elliott
Policy Manager/Co Secretary/Legal Counsel
cc AICD CEO
ACT Division Manager

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